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## OSD DECLASSIFICATION/RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS ON FILE

### REVIEW OF OFFICIAL INFORMATION IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN CONCERNING US SATELLITE RECONNAISSANCE PROGRAM (SAMOS)

#### PART I

The following information concerning the SAMOS reconnaissance project has been officially released or acknowledged, and is a matter of public record. This information has been summarized from an extensive review of unclassified, official US Government documents, official press releases and public speeches of highly-placed Government officials, both military and civilian; and encompasses the period from 1959 to the present.

#### A. Organization and Management.

1. Original development of satellite reconnaissance program beyond study stage was identified as Air Force Weapons System 117L. Program was transferred to Advanced Research Projects Agency in 1958, wherein WS-117L was broken into components called Discoverer, SAMOS, and MIDAS. These three projects were transferred back to the Air Force in November, 1959.

2. The unique management structure established for the SAMOS project in September, 1960 i. e., Secretary of the Air Force (Dr. Charyk) direct to field office (General Greer) at El Segundo, California, has been released. Key personnel of present management have been identified.

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**3. Prime contractor, associates and major sub-contractors have been identified.**

**B. Nature, Importance and Priority of Program.**

1. SAMOS has been identified as a reconnaissance satellite project of highest priority and importance to the United States being developed to provide the US with a world-wide surveillance capability.

**C. Level of Effort.**

1. Program funding for Fiscal Years prior to FY 63 are a matter of public record. (Example - FY 60, \$160M; FY 61, \$273.8M; FY 62, \$276M.) Year-by-year level of effort, therefore, can be ascertained up to FY 63.

**D. Estimate of Operational Date.**

1. While no specific estimate of operational date has been released, the following quote from Page 35, DOD Appropriations Bill 61, Senate Report #1550, 10 June 1960, is significant. "...At the funding level recommended in the budget, it is reported that an operational capability will accrue late in calendar year 1963. The additional \$83,800,000 recommended herein will make it possible to reduce the risks now inherent in the program by increasing substantially the number of research and

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"development launches and by accelerating the program so that an operational capability could be achieved by as much as a full year earlier..."

**E. Technical Details.**

**1. Vehicle.**

- a. Atlas/Agena configuration.
- b. Many details of booster and second stage have been released, such as weights, thrust, guidance, manufacturer, etc.
- c. Additional details of basic Agena vehicle have been published since it is also utilized in the Discoverer Program.
- d. Discoverer Program has been identified as contributing directly to SAMOS through component testing.

**2. Facilities.**

- a. Tracking and data read-out stations have been identified although not as to individual station capability. (Vandenberg California; New Boston, New Hampshire; Kodiak, Alaska; Kaena Point, Hawaii.)
- b. Satellite Test Center (STC), Sunnyvale, California, is known as tracking and control center.
- c. Recent construction of additional satellite tracking stations at Thule, Greenland and Annette Island, Alaska, while not publicized, are known.

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### 3. Technical Approach and Objective.

a. That both photographic and electro-magnetic reconnaissance capability is being developed in SAMOS has been repeatedly stated.

b. Electronic read-out of data from orbiting vehicle has been acknowledged.

c. Objective has been stated "To place vehicle in 94-minute polar orbit which will enable the system to view the entire surface of the earth." Further, that orbit will be as nearly circular as possible.

#### F. Launches.

1. The initial three launches of SAMOS vehicles were identified as such, and publicly announced. They were:

a. SAMOS I, 11 October 1960. Did not achieve orbit.

b. SAMOS II, 31 January 1961. Launch was successful and confirmation of orbit was made to the press. Orbital parameters were furnished and have been continuously reported in unclassified Satellite Situation Reports since that time. It is currently in the United Nations Registry.

c. SAMOS III, 9 September 1961. Unsuccessful - Exploded on the pad.

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2. In each of the above cases, a fact sheet containing considerable information regarding vehicle and proposed launch was furnished to press agencies, examples of which are inclosed. (Inclosure 1)

3. Subsequent launches have not been identified other than by vehicle configuration (Atlas/Agena).

G. Results.

1. No statement has been officially released indicating whether or not there have been any results obtained from any satellite reconnaissance flight.